SETS CONDITIONS FOR LOUISIANA RETURN

Novel Agrees to Testify -- 'If'

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ASSASSINATION FIGURE — Gordon Novel, 29, right, wanted as a witness in the New Orleans probe of the Kennedy assassination, talks with newsmen in the office of his attorney, Jerry Weiner, left. (Dispatch Photo)

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Gordon Novel, the talkative man who actually says very little, has vowed to waive extradition, which hasn't been asked, return to Louisiana and tell all he doesn't know about the Kennedy assassination—but only under his conditions.

Novel held a press conference Friday morning in the 15 by 15-foot office of his attorney, Jerry Weiner, overlooking the Statehouse on the 13th floor of 88 E. Broad St.

ABOUT TWO DOZEN newsmen, some laden with enough television cameras to film an epic, entered shaking their heads in confusion.

They left the same way.

If Novel shed any light on the assassination probe, only a seer could have known.

IN ESSENCE, he said he wanted to return to New Orleans and tell all he knows in Dist. Atty. Jim Garrison's probe of an alleged assassination plot.

However, Novel said he would insist by telegram that he be granted immunity from the charge on which he is being held under bond in Ohio—conspiracy to commit simple burglary of an explosives

depot in Houma, La.

Wednesday, he also was charged in Louisiana with the burglary of that installation.

(Garrison said Friday in New Orleans that the conditions set by Novel are unacceptable.)

NOVEL SEEKS a guarantee that he can return to Ohio after testimony before the grand jury. He also wants Garrison excluded from the grand jury proceedings while he testifies.

The former night club owner additionally seeks a pledge that he will be safe from "intimidation and harassment" in the Pelican State.

However, when pressed by reporters, Novel declared, "I absolutely have no knowledge of a plot to assassinate President Kennedy."

HE MADE that statement over the "no comment" comments of his attorney.

Novel declared again he would fight extradition to Louisiana if his safe conduct demands for a voluntary return are not met.

Gerald S. Collins, deputy assistant to Governor Rhodes, said no requisition for extradition of Novel has been received in Ohio. But, Weiner already has filed a request for an executive hearing on the nonexistent extradition request.

MEANWHILE, back at 88 E. Broad, Novel claimed to have been Louisiana Gov. John J. McKeithen's "chief confidant for a little while . . . during 1965-1966."

In a plethora of unrelated comments and charges, Novel declared that Garrison is backed by "100 of the richest men in New Orleans."

Fiddling with an unlighted pipe, the fugitive charged, "I'm saying there's about $500 million at Garrison's disposal — before it's over."

PRIOR TO Novel's arrest in Gahanna last Saturday, Garrison had called Novel "a most important witness" in the assassination investigation.

Novel claims he worked for Garrison, supplying the district attorney with surveillance and anti-surveillance electronic devices.

Garrison has denied the allegation.

ASKED IF HE did any electronics eavesdropping for Garrison, Novel replied, "No comment."

"Do you have any tapes of Garrison that could be detrimental to his investigation?" a reporter asked.

Novel smiled and echoed, "No comment."

NOVEL SAID he wanted Garrison excluded from the grand jury questioning because, "I think that Mr. Garrison is one of the greatest mesmerizers in the world."

Novel also contended that Garrison has stacked the grand jury with "some of his best friends."

He said his code name while working for Garrison was "Alexander," short for Alexander Graham Bell, inventor of the telephone.

THE CONNECTION, Novel maintained, was due to his "bugging" assistance.

Novel, 29, who speaks in a dialect that sounds like a mixture of New Jersey and the Southern Magnolia, said he is looking for a job in Columbus and is considering going into business here.

He declined to discuss the nature of that business, except to say it would not be electronics, (of which he claims to have knowledge), nightclubs or newspaper, radio or television reporting.

NEWSMEN JOKINGLY asked if he conconsidered going into the private detective business, Weiner declared he would be ineffective in such an endeavor because Novel is too well known.

To that statement, Stan Greenbaum, a private investigator hired on Novel's behalf, fired back, "Don't print that. Being known helps my business."

Novel's aside concerning the Louisiana governor referred to a highly prized Louisiana Brigadier General's card which he flashed to newsmen.

THE LOUISIANA GOVERNOR'S office has denied ever issuing the card to Novel, saying it is a forgery.

Novel ~~refused to reveal~~ where he is staying in Columbus.

He also refused comment on the status of his romance with Chicago Playboy Club Bunny Abby Mulligan, 23, of 226 E. Oakland Ave.